

February and early March of 2005, Fairy Terns were found to be still breeding. This may warrant a review of the breeding schedule for this bird at the Houtman Abrolhos Islands to late February – early March.

On 2 March 2005 at the north end of Pelsaert Island (28°54'13"S 114°00'11"E) we found a colony of 30–35 Fairy Terns nesting with freshly laid eggs, on coral shingle.

On 1 March 2005 on Wooded Island (28°45'05"S 113°48'15"E) a colony of about 30 Fairy Terns were nesting with eggs and newly hatched young, on sand and coral shingle.

On 28 February 2005 on Serventy Island, adult birds were observed carrying fish to young hidden amongst coral shingle.

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Extension of the known geographic range of the Princess Parrot: a record from Eucla, 1872 – Storr (1986, pp 25–26) summarized the known southern limits of the Princess Parrot *Polytelis alexandrae* in Western Australia as Carlisle Lakes and Queen Victoria Spring. This is shown on the distribution map published by Johnstone and Storr (1998, p 294).

A detailed description of parrots seen in 1872 in the vicinity of Eucla fits this species and no other.

John Muir commenced pastoral activities at Eucla, landing sheep

there in March 1872. He kept a diary, parts of which were recently published (Muir 2005). In March and April 1872 he recorded a detailed description of a species of parrot that was new to him. Muir had arrived in WA as a seven year old in 1844 and lived at Cape Riche and Forest Hill, well outside the range of the Princess Parrot.

His descriptions are as follows:

- 'a red-beaked parrot' was shot (letter dated 10.3.1872, published in Muir 2005, p 152);
- 'shot a parrot never saw one like it before, blue head and wings and a dirtish green on the back and red underside of the tail. It had all the colours of the rainbow' (letter dated 28.4.1872, published in Muir 2005, p 154).

These records extend the known range of the Princess Parrot c. 330 km south-east of Carlisle Lakes and c. 540 km south-east of Queen Victoria Spring.

Other early travellers made no explicit record of this species. However, c. 40 miles west of Eucla, Edward Eyre in March 1841 noted that he 'met with several flights of a very large description of parrot, quite unknown to me, coming apparently from the north-east, and settling among the shrubs and bushes around. They had evidently come to eat the fruit growing behind the sand-hills...' (Eyre 1845 vol. 1, p 344). This record probably refers to the Princess Parrot. Although Eyre had previously explored

parts of South Australia, none of the areas traversed intersected the range of this species in that State.

John Forrest explored around Eucla in June–July 1870 and made no reference to parrots (Forrest 1875), nor did the surveyors Jones (1880), Gair (1883) and Muir (1901) or Anon. (1908). Other early visitors to the Eucla region, Ralph Tate (February 1879) and Alexander Crawford (?1880s), observed parrots but provided no identification or description (Tate 1879, p 125, Crawford 1900, p 38).

A search of *The Eucla Recorder*, a newspaper published at Eucla from 1898 to 1900, yielded no information about this species.

It therefore remains unknown whether the Princess Parrot bred at Eucla (and subsequently became extinct there) or was only a sporadic nomad from the interior.

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